



# ***PRESS RELEASE***

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: Friday, January 18, 2008**  
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### **Dramatic increase in Riverside 911 calls**

*Redirection of cellphone reports accounts for only a portion of increase*

Riverside, CA -- Riverside Public Safety Communications reports an astounding 48% increase in total service calls in 2007, compared to the previous year. Over the prior three years, year-to-year changes had been plus or minus 6% or less.

Incoming emergency 911 calls generated 198,573 documented police incidents and 27,383 fire or emergency medical calls.

The total of 875,559 calls handled by Riverside Dispatch included 203,270 traditional landline 911 calls, 112,798 wireless 911 calls and 370,860 calls to the police non-emergency and administrative numbers. The remaining 188,631 outbound calls followed up on reports, made contact with other agencies and returned calls to area residents. Totals in all categories rose significantly last year, handled by the same number of staff Dispatch has had for the past 10 years, Acting Communications Manager John Wright said.

	Total calls	Hardline 911	Wireless 911	NonEmergency	Outbound
2007 -	875,559	203,270	112,798	370,860	188,631
2006 -	531,043	152,018	32,135	258,167	148,723

In 2007, Riverside completed an 18-month conversion process that resulted in all 911 calls originating from cellular telephones in the city going directly to Riverside Dispatch, after previously having been received by California Highway Patrol Dispatch in San Bernardino and re-directed here.

Traditional hardline 911 calls are up 38%; wireless 911 calls are up 351%, for a combined 71% increase in total incoming 911 calls to Riverside Dispatch in 2007.

The dramatic increases are also in spite of the redirection of many City inquiry calls and graffiti reporting to the City of Riverside 311 call center over the past two years.

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Riverside's Emergency 911 calls were answered within the desired first 10-second threshold more than 93% of the time, well within the 90% required by state guidelines but less than the 96% average reported in 2006, reflective of demand.

In addition to the reported call volume, Riverside Dispatch also handles about 20,000 entries annually related to the Criminal Justice Information System and California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CJIS/CLETS) to track auto thefts and related tracking information.

**Interesting Riverside 911 facts:**

- In one hour of one day, June 26, 2007, the dispatch center handled 2,370 incoming calls, in addition to handling mutual aid requests and coordinating support activities, in response to a plastic recycling facility fire near Hwy.60.
- During the city-wide power failure of October 26, 2007, Dispatch handled more than 2,166 calls in a two-hour period, compared to 123 calls during the same "normal" two-hour period during the previous week.
- During the wildfires of September 2007, Riverside Dispatch was inundated with calls by Riverside residents seeking evacuation instructions, despite the fact there were no fires anywhere in the immediate area.
- It is not uncommon for several dozen motorists making wireless 911 calls reporting the same incident.

In addition to the reported call volume increase, Riverside Dispatch is now handling greater responsibility for emergency medical calls.

At the request of the Riverside Fire Department and by approval of the City Council, the Public Safety Communications Center implemented a new Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Program in December 2007. The Dispatchers are now trained and certified as EMDs and are now providing pre-arrival medical instructions to callers on medical aid incidents. In many cases, the program requires the EMD to stay on the phone with the caller when providing critical life support instructions until responders arrive, Wright said. In order to provide the highest level of patient care possible, these calls cause the Dispatcher to be unavailable to answer other incoming calls until they can release the caller to the responders at the scene.

